

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario



May 2008

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The President's Message

Welcome to the 41st administrative year of the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario. We had a busy year, which included evening talks, open to our membership and the public, held at Victoria College and Carleton University. And undaunted by the sudden walk out of the Toronto Transit workers on April 25 which lead to traffic jams in the downtown core and a high demand for taxicabs, VSAO members gathered at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, for our annual spring conference on the topic of Victorian Interiors. A summary of the conference appears in this volume of the newsletter.

Plans for next year's conference, scheduled for late April 2009 are already underway. During the summer months, the executive will be discussing themes and keynote speakers for that event. Suggestions for speakers may be forwarded to the president or the members of the executive. In addition, over the next academic year, the VSAO will continue to host several evening lectures in Toronto. Details on these events will appear in the autumn newsletter. We also encourage the organization of VSAO talks outside of the Toronto area. Please notify us of any events planned for the fall or winter that should be included in our September newsletter.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to the executive who not only make my job much easier, but very enjoyable. Our secretary, Alison Halsall has agreed to remain on the executive for another term. David Latham, our current treasurer has also offered to stay on for a second

term. My thanks also to our past president, Dennis Denisoff, who maintains our website in a professional and timely manner. And of course, thanks to our members at large, Christine Bolus-Reichert for organizing the ACCUTE panel, and Barbara Leckie, for her assistance with the newsletter. Last but not least, I must thank Stephen Heathorn for his years of service. He leaves the VSAO executive after having served two three-year terms as member-at-large, and undertaken charge of the VSAO newsletter. And finally, a warm welcome to Martin Danahay, from Brock University, our new member at large.

The VSAO continues to grow in membership; this membership reflects the interdisciplinary nature of Victorian Studies by attracting members from literature, history, art history, cultural studies and the history of science. This is great news for the association, and I look forward to another year of interesting talks and intellectual stimulation.

Sincerely yours, Anne

Anne Clendinning at annec@nipissingu.ca

The VSAO 2008 Spring Conference

Barbara Leckie

The VSAO's annual conference was held at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, on 26 April 2008. This one-day event, entitled "Victorian Interiors: Material and Metaphorical," included a panel of three speakers in the morning and two plenary speakers in the afternoon.



Left to Right: Mary Wilson Carpenter, Anne Clendinning,
D.M.R. Bentley, Jean Rosenfeld.

The three speakers in the morning programme approached Victorian interiors from a variety of angles. In "A Noble House in the City": The Victorian Interiors of Elite Homes in Late-Nineteenth-Century Hamilton, Ontario" Jean Rosenfeld (History/Visual Arts, York

University) discussed two privileged homes of the elite in Hamilton alongside slides displaying their sumptuous interiors. In “The Interior as ‘Common Property’ and ‘Uncontrollable Heart’ in Duncan Campbell Scott’s *In the Village of Viger* (1896)” D.M.R. Bentley (English, University of Western Ontario) approached the question of the interior through the prism of privacy, intrusion, and the more modest homes represented in Scott’s work. In the final paper, “Cow-heels and Water Drops: John Snow’s Metropolitan Interiors,” Mary Wilson Carpenter (Emerita, English, Queen’s University) turned to the intersection of housing of the poor, cholera outbreaks, and Snow’s medical research in London at mid-century.

Anne Clendinning, VSAO president, presided over the Association’s annual business meeting at lunch. The main item on the agenda related to the location of next year’s conference. In the face of rising costs outlined by the treasurer, David Latham, the possibility of holding the conference at York’s Glendon College campus was discussed. There is a tradition of successful VSAO conferences at this location [in the 70s] and, after debating the pros and cons of such a shift, it was agreed that the conference would be held in this new location next year.



Matthew Rowlinson, Anne Clendinning, and Janice Helland.

Following lunch the two plenary session papers returned to the topic of Victorian Interiors in the material and metaphorical sense. The first paper, “From Mud Cabin to Private Palace: Production, Display, and Marketing of Craft in Ireland and Scotland, 1888-1900,” was delivered by Janice Helland (Women’s Studies and Fine Art, Queen’s University). As the title suggests, Helland provided both a sense of the depth and range of interiors (the mud cabin and the private palace) and their interrelation through a focus on a specific topic: the marketing of crafts. Helland did a marvellous job of illustrating the complexity of the relationship between the craftspeople in their cabins and the women in their wealthy homes who supported and advanced their livelihoods. The accompanying slides gave the audience a vivid sense of this work and the material spaces it engaged. In the second paper, “Foreign Bodies: Symptom, Race, and Representation in Darwin and Freud,” Matthew Rowlinson

(English, University of Western Ontario) turned to more metaphorical interiors in his compelling elaboration of affinities between Freud, Darwin, the symptom, and the human.

Taken together the day's conference papers offered an impressive array of perspectives on the conference topic: from homes of the wealthy to homes of the poor, from the country to the city, from psychological to philosophical interiors, these papers provided many new avenues for pursuing questions of Victorian interiority.

The conference closed with sherry hour at Burwash Hall during which conference speakers and participants continued their discussions of the day's events. The VSAO would like to thank the Department of English at York University and the Principal of Victoria College at the University of Toronto for their support.



Sherry hour at Burwash Hall

The Forum

Stephen Heathorn

For this issue of The Forum, I contacted a number of recent PhD graduates (from Ontario English Literature and History programmes) for their perspective on the current state of the academic job market for Victorianists. For quite understandable reasons, a number declined to put their views in print, and only two of those contacted agreed to write for us, and only one of these pieces was completed in time for the newsletter.

Amy Milne Smith defended her PhD at Toronto in Modern British History in 2006. Her dissertation was entitled "Clubland: Imagining the Nineteenth-Century London Club, Manliness, and Aristocratic Culture" and the same year she published an article "A Flight to Domesticity? Making A Home in The Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880-1914," in *Journal of British Studies* 45:4 (2006): 796-818. She took up an appointment as Assistant Professor in the History Department at the University of Southern Mississippi in the summer of 2007.

Out of Strachey's Shadow

Amy Milne Smith

In my first year of graduate school, my advisor took me aside and warned me about the state of the job market for Victorian Britain (at least in History departments). “Get out while you still can” seemed to be the message. This is a common theme among Victorianists despondent at the state of the job market. Who wants to hire a nineteenth-century British specialist any more; hasn't it all been done? Anyone who studies the period knows that the nineteenth century is a dynamic and fascinating field, and yet still these old stereotypes remain, even in the academic world. But why such prejudice, and what is to be done?

In seeking a cause, I believe Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* is still to blame. His 1918 debunking of four nineteenth century heroes (Manning, Nightingale, Gordon and Arnold) was so convincing many took the accounts to be objective analyses rather than scathing caricatures. He set the scene for the general public, and many academics, who believed the Victorian era was full of prudes, hypocrites, and grad grinds. Any interesting historical, literary, or artistic figures must be more of an exception than a rule.

At the end of the Great War many looked back to the haughty Victorians as the cause of the horrors they suffered through. In the mid-twentieth century some looked back a hundred years to a mythical era where people knew their place, feared God, and had respect for their elders. But now, in the early-twenty-first century, there is no longer the need to distance ourselves from the nineteenth century, or the want to imagine a kind of golden age. In fact, one of the reasons the Victorian era is still so important to students, and thus still important to university programs, is that it set the agenda for the twentieth century. In its full context, the age was a time of religious doubt, imperial uncertainty, technological innovation, and rampant commercialism — not so very different from our own turn-of-the-century existence.

For Victorian Studies as a discipline to keep relevant, we simply have to embrace and accept this complicated history. While not a new or “sexy” field, the Victorian era is hardly one the academy is likely to ignore any time soon. Britain may not have the pride of place it once had in every Commonwealth country, but Victorian Britain is still of interest in a variety of places. In many ways the best way to stay relevant, and competitive on the job market, is to embrace the complex reality the Victorians inhabited. They did not live in isolation; in our global society, and increasingly non-Eurocentric job market, the best candidates realize this reality. The British ruled the largest empire in the world, whether this is a speciality or not, it is now relevant to almost every Victorian-focused job. The British also, despite their island status, were part of a European community in one way or another; for better or worse, Britain is now often being considered one of many European nations — new hires in History departments might have to venture off the island onto the continent or even across the Atlantic. The world of academia no longer works like an old boys club, and one can rarely expect to choose the city or even country where one's first job will be. But with an

unapologetic confidence that what we do still matter (in many ways now more than ever!) be assured new adventures await.

VSAO Executive Changes

Martin Danahay has been elected Member at Large on the VSAO executive. He replaces Stephen Heathorn. Martin describes himself as follows:

Martin Danahay is a transnational subject, having spent roughly the first third of his life in England, the second in various cities and Universities in the U.S., and is looking forward to spending the rest of it (hopefully) in Canada. In his current incarnation he is Professor of English at Brock University. His most recent book-length publication is "Gender at Work in Victorian Culture" (Ashgate, 2005) and he is currently working on a multinational study of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Jekyll and Hyde" in English, French, German and Italian with an international team of Stevenson scholars.

Barbara Leckie will take over editorship of the VSAO Newsletter. All inquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to her: barbara_leckie@carleton.ca

Information on Journals Edited by VSAO Members

The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies publishes semi-annually in the Spring and Fall scholarship on Pre-Raphaelite, Aesthetic, and Decadent art, culture, and literature of the nineteenth century. It is edited by David Latham at York University (since 1995), and includes studies by such VSAO members as David Bentley, Dennis Denisoff, Karen Dieleman, Lesley Higgins, David Kent, Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, Linda Marshall, and William Whitla, and studies by many beyond our borders like Isobel Armstrong, Angela Leighton, Jerome McGann, J. Hillis Miller, etc. For more information about subscriptions, submissions, and more than thirty years of past issues, please visit the website: www.yorku.ca/jprs

Isis, the History of Science Society's flagship publication, is the widest circulation journal in the history of science. Each issue begins with topical articles providing in-depth coverage of leading issues in the history of science. News of the Profession and an Essay Review follow. Issues conclude with an extensive collection of books reviews, covering all fields and time periods in the history of science. We would welcome submissions on the history of Victorian science, medicine, or technology in cultural context. *Isis* is edited by Bernie Lightman.

Visit the website at: <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/journals/journal/isis.html>

Recent articles of interest to Victorianists:

- Rebekah Higgitt and Charles W. J. Withers, "Science and Sociability: Women as Audience at the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1831-1901." (March 2008)
- Victoria Carroll, "'Beyond the Pale of Ordinary Criticism': Eccentricity and

the Fossil Books of Thomas Hawkins.” (June 2007)
– Thomas L. Hankins, “A ‘Large and Graceful Sinusity’: John Herschel’s
Graphical Method.” (December 2006)

Panels of Interest to Victorianists at the Upcoming Congress

Christine Bolus-Reichert

Following is a summary of some of the panels at this year’s Congress (University of British Columbia, 31 May to 8 June 2008) that might be of interest to VSAO members. The VSAO panel is on Saturday 31 May at 2:00 pm. The panels mentioned here all focus primarily on Victorian studies, but there are individual Victorianist papers in other panels as well. Check the final program for the full listings. To get a full sense of the diversity of offerings, check the Congress website:

http://www.fedcan.ca/congress2008/program/association_conference_program.html

Abbreviations

ACCUTE – Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of
English
BSC – Bibliographical Society of Canada
CASBC – Canadian Association for Studies in Book Culture
CHA – Canadian Historical Association
CLSG – Christianity and Literature Study Group
CPSA – Canadian Political Science Association
CSCH – Canadian Society of Church History

Saturday, May 31, 2008

9:00am – 10:15am

ACCUTE

Victorian Illustration

Organizers/Chairs: Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge

Location: Buchanan D205

Ann F. Howey (Brock) “Desire and Death: Illustrating Elaine”

Caley Ehnes (Victoria) “‘Hear an illustration, reader’: Illustrating Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847)”

Heather McAlpine (Ottawa) “‘Thoughts Towards Nature’: Pre-Raphaelite Emblems and Illustration in *The Germ*”

2:00pm – 3:15pm

VSAO/ACCUTE

The Victorians and Language

Organizer: Christine Bolus-Reichert (Toronto) / Chair: Dennis Denisoff (Ryerson)
Location: Buchanan D216
D.M.R. Bentley (Western) "The Sexual Languages of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Venus Verticordia* and Related Works"
Ann Gagné (Western) "The Language of Embodied Experience: Touch as Discourse in 'Theodora: A Fragment'"
Gregory Mackie (UBC) "The Function of Decorum at the Present Time: Moral Language in 'an Oscar Wilde Play'"

Sunday, June 1, 2008

9:00am – 10:15am

VSAWC/ACCUTE

Victorian Children

Organizer: Kristen Guest (UNBC) / Chair: Lisa Surridge (Victoria)

Location: Buchanan D228

Marjorie Stone (Dalhousie) "Victorian Children, Slavery, and Romantic Beginnings: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'The African' and 'The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point'"
Mavis Reimer (Winnipeg) "'What the Baby Thought of It': Evelyn Sharp's Suffrage Writing and the Rhetoric of Victorian Children's Literature"
Charlie Peters (Manitoba) "Killing is 'a Waste of Time'; or, The Prophecies of Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* and of Pip in *Moby Dick*"

10:30am – 12:00pm

ACCUTE

Transatlantic Exchanges in the Nineteenth Century

Organizers/Chair: Kevin Hutchings (UNBC) and Julia M. Wright (Dalhousie)

Location: Buchanan D214

Kevin Hutchings (UNBC) and Julia M. Wright (Dalhousie) "Introduction: The Ashgate Series in Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Studies"
Meagan Timney (Dalhousie) "From Reticence to Repast: Transatlantic Metaphors of Nourishment in Frederick Douglass and Chartist Poetry"
Sarah Ficke (North Carolina, Chapel Hill) "Citizenship, Race, and the Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Adventure Novel"
Daniel Hannah (Lakehead) "Theorizing a Queer Atlantic in the Nineteenth Century"

12:00pm – 1:45pm

ACCUTE

Victorian Associations Meeting

Buchanan D209

2:30pm – 4:00pm

CSCH

Pre-Confederation Christianity

Gordon Heath (McMaster Divinity College), "When Friends and Neighbors Become Enemies: Canadian Baptists and the War of 1812"

Denis McKim (University of Toronto), “‘Righteousness Exalteth a Nation’: Providence , Empire and the Forging of the Early Canadian Presbyterian Identity”
Todd Webb (Laurentian University), “‘Popery is Evidently Nodding to its Fall’: Methodism and Anti-Catholicism in British North America, 1837-1860”

Monday, June 2, 2008

9am – 10:15am

NAVSA/ACCUTE

Green Victoria

Organizer/Chair: Dennis Denisoff (Ryerson)

Location: Buchanan D216

Danielle Coriale (Brandeis) “Charlotte Brontë’s Naturalist Imagination”

Susan Hamilton (Ryerson) “The Power of Failure: Frances Power Cobbe and the Anti-vivisection Press”

Eddy Kent (UBC) “Green London and Nature’s Triumph over Alienated Labour in William Morris’s *News From Nowhere*”

9am – 10:30pm

CHA

Migration, Cultural Transfer, and Identity: the Case of the Scots

Facilitator: Jack Little, Simon Fraser University

Location: BUCH D219

Tanja Buelmann, Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) “Diaspora, Terrains of Belonging and the Role of Organised Ethnicity: A Comparative Study of Scottish Migrant Community Identities in Canada and New Zealand to 1910”

Jill Harland, University of Otago (New Zealand), “The Orcadian Odyssey across three colonial boundaries: The Emigration of Orkney Islanders and their subsequent creation of island communities in Canada, New Zealand and Australia 1840-1914”

Wendy Wickwire, University of Victoria, “He Went From Where He Came: J.A. Teit’s ‘Shetland Project’ in British Columbia”

10:45am – 12:15pm

CHA

Writing Experience

Facilitator: Willeen Keough, Simon Fraser University

Location: BUCH D222

E. Jane Errington, Royal Military College, “Webs of Affection and Obligation: A Glimpse into Families and the 19th Century Transatlantic Community

Rosalind McClean, University of Waikato (New Zealand), “Places Past: Recollections of Scottish Childhoods in the Life Narratives of Nineteenth-Century New Zealand Immigrants”

2:00pm – 3:30pm

ACCUTE

Let me hear your body talk: Physical Epistemes

Location: Buchanan D319

Trevor Cook (Toronto) "Milton's Capital Secret: Gnosticism and Nationalism in *Samson Agonistes*"

Tyson Stolte (UBC) "Peering Into the Grave: Bleak House, Victorian Psychology, and the Status of the Buried Body"

Mary Arseneau (Ottawa) "'Our self-undoing': Christina Rossetti and Graves' Disease."

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

9:00am – 10:15am

ACCUTE

The Order of Things: Victorian Self-Fashioning

Location: Buchanan D228

Krista Lysack (Western) "Devotional Time in Christina Rossetti's *Time Flies*"

Jenny Heijun Wills (Wilfrid Laurier) "Make me over: Being Dressed up in Victorian Novels"

Dave Buchanan (Grant MacEwan) "Travels with a Tricycle: Elizabeth Robins Pennell's Stevensonian Travel Writing"

12:00pm – 1:50pm

CLSG

Skepticism and Faith Experience in Victorian and Edwardian Literature

Chair: John North (Waterloo)

Location: Buchanan D213

Marilyn Orr (Laurentian) "George Eliot and the Lure of the Holy"

Michael John DiSanto (Algoma) "Faith in History: Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* and Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*"

Karen Selesky (Fraser Valley) "'A faithful friend is the medicine of life': Redefining Social Reform"

Karl Persson (UBC) "London at Cross Purposes: The Displacement of Marxian Protest by the Augustinian City of God in G. K. Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* and *The Ball and the Cross*"

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

9:00am – 10:30 a.m.

CASBC

Books Without Borders

Chair: Yuri Cowan (English, UofT)

Location: Barber 461

Myra J. Tawfik (Law, University of Windsor), "For the Encouragement of Learning: Copyright in 19th century North America"

Michael J. Everton (SFU), "A Canadian Devil, I Presume? Policing the North American Reprint Trade in the 1870s"

Barry Magrill (University of British Columbia), "Architectural Pattern Books and the Business of Church-Building in Nineteenth Century Canada"

10:45am – 12:15pm

CHA

Migrations of Empire: Comparative Studies of Colonialism, Religion, and Gender

FACILITATOR: Adele Perry, University of Manitoba

Location: LAW 178

Peggy Brock, Edith Cowan University (Australia), “Missionaries Adapting to Indigenous Societies: central Australia and northwest British Columbia”

Patricia Grimshaw, University of Melbourne (Australia), ““That we may obtain our religious liberty...’: Victorian Aborigines, Colonialism and Cultural Exchanges, 1870 to 1918”

Charlotte MacDonald, Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), “Unsettling colonial spaces: Sarah Selwyn’s Aotearoa/New Zealand, Eton and Lichfield, England, c.1840s-1900”

Cecilia Morgan, OISE/University of Toronto, “Colonial Contacts and Imperial Networks: Canadian Contexts”

11:15am – 12:30pm

BSC

Session 2

Chair: Shelley Beal (University of Toronto)

Dean Seeman (Memorial University of Newfoundland), Fr. Drew Morgan (National Institute for Newman Studies, Pittsburgh), and Monty Crivella (ASE Edge, Pittsburgh), “The John Henry Newman Digitization Project”

Friday, June 6, 2008

9:00am – 10:45am

CPSA

Bentham and Mill

Chair: Cara Camcastle (SFU)

Discussants: Cara Camcastle (SFU) and Lee Ward (Regina)

James Crimmins (Huron University College), Bentham’s Republican Politics

Doug Long (UWO), Jurisprudence as Political Theory: Jeremy Bentham’s Enlightenment Project

Wendy Donner (Carleton), Autonomy, Tradition and Community in John Stuart Mill